

O 101727Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7306
INFO SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL DURBAN IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS PRETORIA 000254

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: APRIL 22 SET FOR ELECTION DATE; OUT-OF-COUNTRY
VOTING AN ISSUE

¶1. President Kgalema Motlanthe, during February 10 remarks to the National Assembly, announced that national elections will take place on April 22. The announcement followed consultations with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the nine provincial governments. Motlanthe stressed that the formal proclamation of the election date would take place at a later date.

¶2. A legal skirmish regarding the voting rights of South Africans living overseas could delay the formal proclamation of the election date. The Constitutional Court is set to decide whether to uphold a February 9 ruling by the Pretoria High Court reaffirming broadly the right to vote for South Africans living abroad. In recent elections, out-of country voting has been tightly restricted, and the IEC's capacity to implement full-scale overseas voting, should the ruling be upheld, is uncertain.

LA LIME